

# THE WAY FORWARD

Protecting Children and Nurturing Mississippi Families

June 2016

## Governor Signs Senate Bill 2179

On May 13, 2016 Governor Phil Bryant signed Senate Bill 2179 establishing the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS). MDCPS was formerly operating as the Division of Family & Children's Services under the Mississippi Department of Human Services, but has recently undergone restructuring as part of the settlement resulting from the lawsuit filed on behalf of *Olivia Y.*

Commissioner David Chandler has been working diligently with Governor Bryant to increase the level of care for Mississippi's foster children. The signing of Senate Bill 2179 brings the MDCPS one step closer to achieving their goal of protecting children and nurturing Mississippi families. Governor Bryant outlined this bill as one of his highest priorities in his 2016 State of the State address, and the Mississippi Legislature acted on that request during the 2016 Legislative Session.

*"We are going to  
provide services  
for our foster  
children that are  
the best in the  
nation."  
- Governor Phil  
Bryant*



MDCPS staff members proudly witnessed Governor Bryant sign the Senate Bill.

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THE WAY FORWARD

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# Meet Our Senior Management Team

## Kristi Plotner, Administration

Kristi comes to us from Medicaid where she served in various roles including grants administration, policy development, administration of mental programs and systems change efforts for the last 19 years. Kristi will be an integral part of establishing our agency's firm and supportive foundation.



## Seth Shannon, Chief of Staff

Seth is an attorney with 7 years of legal experience working for both businesses and non-profits. Seth will be responsible for reviewing policies and practices and advising the Department and each of the Divisions.



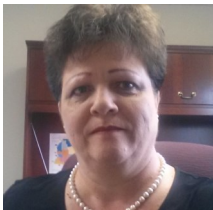
## Tracy Malone, Child Welfare Operations

Tracy's 26 year career with MDHS includes 10 years of experience as an Area Social Work Supervisor and an additional 10 years as a Regional Director. In her new position, Tracy will be responsible for Staff and Services in and for the Child Welfare Field within MDCPS.



## Cindy Greer, Information Technology

Cindy brings with her 34 years of Information Technology (IT) experience. She has been charged with managing all IT projects and Continuous Quality Improvement efforts for our agency. Cindy is most looking forward to improving customer service through the automation of forms and processes, the state-wide tablet rollout project and the replacement of MACWIS.



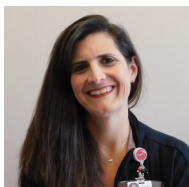
## Takesha Darby, Finance

Takesha has 17 years of related experience working in private sector, non-profit and state government. She is transforming the Budget and Financial Planning Unit into a new MDCPS Financial Services Department. In her new role, Takesha will oversee audit, budget, cash management, cost allocation, grants, internal control, payroll, payable and receivable functions.



## Anna Lyn Whitt, Human Resources

Anna Lyn was introduced last month as our Human Resource (HR) Director and has been busy developing the newly formed division. Her experience in administration, management and regulation over the last 10 years brings a unique perspective to HR.



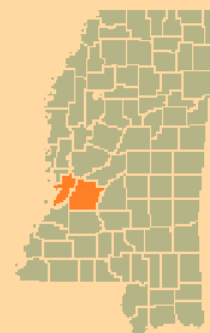
## Region Spotlight: III-South

In an effort to reduce overdue investigations, the Leadership Team in Region III-South works with their Center for the Support of Families coach to develop a flowchart that outlines steps and timelines. This chart is then shared with every Regional Supervisor, Supervisor and Worker.

The Leadership Team holds weekly briefings to discuss any issues that may have come up during that week. The Supervisors review their Worker's investigations daily to ensure that the timelines are being met. The Regional Supervisors conduct random workload reviews to see if any investigations are approaching the overdue date.

Since the creation of the Timeline Flowchart, Region III-South has substantially reduced the number of overdue investigations. They continue to strengthen quality and safety for all children by completing investigations according to timeline goals.

**Region III-South is comprised of Hinds and Warren Counties.**



# THE TABLET ROLLOUT CONTINUES

On June 6th, the delivery trucks began arriving in MDCPS Regions across the state as the tablet rollout continues!

We want to thank our Mississippi State University **nSPARC** partners for their support with this project. They have assisted our team in configuring tablets as well as packing up tablet cases with accessories. Their help has been instrumental to the success of this project!



**Congratulations to Tam Garner and Oki Ragins on their May Graduation!**  
**MDCPS is so proud of what you two have accomplished!**

Effective  
July 1, 2016,  
MDCPS will  
offer many  
employees  
more  
competitive  
compensation  
with the  
implementation  
of a new  
salary plan.  
This  
realignment  
will impact  
various field  
operations  
positions  
agency wide.

## Changes in Field Operations

A number of exciting changes are taking place in Field Operations as we seek to provide additional support and services to the staff both in the regions and at the state level. Viedale Washington will be serving as the Deputy Director of Western Field Operations, and Wendy Bryant will be serving as the Deputy Director of Eastern Field Operations. These directors will supervise the Regional Directors, the Licensure and Adoption Directors, and the Practice Coach Directors.

An additional Deputy Director of Field Programs, Tonya Rogillio, has been added to ensure adequate management, supervision, and support of the staff in the Permanency, Placement, Special Investigations, and Field Resource Support Units at the State Office. The Field Operations Executive team also includes Carrie Coggins, Director of the Special Project Unit, and Jaworski Davenport as the Field Operations Data Analysis Director.

Staff in the field recently underwent an intense Workload Audit to verify staffing needs throughout the state. Based on this information, 254 new positions have been allocated to direct services, licensure and adoption in an effort to ensure that staff has manageable caseloads and adequate supervision so that quality services can be provided to the children and families of Mississippi.

Additionally, Financial Coordinators and Personnel Specialists will be placed throughout the regions to assist with bookkeeping/financial management and to assist with personnel responsibilities, including the hiring of new staff.

As we seek to stabilize the foundations of the regions throughout the state, we look ahead to what we know will be exciting times as we continue moving forward.



# Join the MDCPS 5k Team!



On Thursday, June 30th Governor Phil Bryant will host his annual "5k Run For Health" in downtown Jackson at 5:30 p.m. Lace up your walking or running shoes, and plan to join the MDCPS team on the south steps of the Capitol Building.

Show a little school spirit, and wear your favorite team's colors! A \$10 donation earns you a t-shirt and a step toward improving your overall health and well-being.

You can register online [here](#). For more information, email [Chris.Alexander@mdhs.ms.gov](mailto:Chris.Alexander@mdhs.ms.gov). But please don't delay! Registration closes June 23rd! Hope to see you there!

## Expect to see a lot of new faces in the coming months.

MDCPS is preparing to hire college graduates looking to make a difference in the lives of Mississippi's children and families. In the next several months we plan to fill more than 200 positions across the state with dynamic people who are ready to serve our most vulnerable citizens. Please direct interested individuals to [www.mspb.ms.gov](http://www.mspb.ms.gov) for complete job descriptions and to apply online, or they may email their resume to [jobs@mdcps.ms.gov](mailto:jobs@mdcps.ms.gov). Encourage them to come be a part of the great things that are happening here!



## MDCPS IT UPDATE

**New System Project** - The IT "CCWIS" Project Team is busy with the new system project to replace the current MACWIS system. A lot of progress has been made thus far, and the team is looking to keep this momentum going!

We need **YOU**, the Field Operations staff, on board to help us throughout this project. This is YOUR system, and as we build it, we want your input to ensure it meets your needs. You will hear more about opportunities to assist as the team continues to work diligently on this project. We also want ideas from you on what to call the new system!

**Electronic Signatures** - The IT Team is working along with MDHS technical staff to provide online Human Resources hire packet forms for everyone to access and sign using electronic signatures with a software called DocuSign. Being able to access these forms online will save time and improve the HR process as we move into the huge hiring effort for our agency.

You will see more information when the forms are ready for all staff to use. The team will also begin automating many other agency forms to be accessible online. We are so excited about this project!

**iPhones** - When the new fiscal year begins in July (and after the IT team recovers from the tablet rollout!), we will begin upgrading cell phones across the state with iPhones. This should be a huge improvement for field staff and assist everyone with their daily activities.



**Please contact your IT Help Desk for assistance with any computer issues. Call 1-877-244-2528 or email [helpdesk.macwis@mdhs.ms.gov](mailto:helpdesk.macwis@mdhs.ms.gov).**